



## MODERN EDUCATION IN MADRASAS: A PERSPECTIVE STUDY OF DAR AL-ULOOM DEOBAND

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### ABSTRACT

*This research paper is a perceptual study of Dar al-Uloom Deoband in the Indian sub-continent to find out its educational approach and perception regarding modern education and locate the current state of madrasa education in India with special reference to modern education imparted in madrasas. The study takes into account the aims and objectives of Dar al-Uloom Deoband, its philosophical and historical background, its curriculum and pedagogical practices. The study intends to find out to what extent it keeps pace with the public institutions of contemporary times and to which degree it is relevant to the needs of contemporary times. Dar al-Uloom at Deoband is one of the premier institutions of traditional Islamic learning in India. It has more than three thousand small and big madrasas following its curriculum and adheres the same ideology and the same school of thought. For having been occupied an exalted and celebrated position among Indian madrasas and having been a prestigious seat of Islamic learning of Shari'ah studies, Dar al-Uloom is regarded Azhar-e-Hind and umm-al madaris in India (mother of the madrasas). The study of Dar al-Uloom and its findings will be the representatives of a large number of madrasas spread over the length and breadth of the county with a number abroad madrasas. The nature, feature and characteristics of a large section of the madrasas following Deoband and Deobandi School of Thought will largely surface though this study. It is also an effort to find out how much Indian madrasas are modernized, updated and to what extent they are at par with public institutions of the country and upto which standard they are imparting modern education to thousands of Muslim children studying in these madrasas.*

### Index terms

**Keyword:** Modern education, Madrasa, Muslims, Deoband, Dar al-Uloom

### Introduction

*Madrasah* is an Arabic word which simply means a place of learning. *Madrasa* as an educational institution is the result of historical evolution having its roots and origin in *Madina* at *Ashaab-e-Suffa*, a pavement, near Prophet's Mosque, where *Prophet Muhammed* used to disseminate religious knowledge to his companions. During the regime of *Umayyad* dynasty (661-750 CE) and initial phase of *Abbasid* dynasty (750-1258 CE), the process of teaching learning and dissemination of knowledge used to take place in the mosques. Teachers were known as *Kuttabs*. With the expansion of Islamic state, *madrasa* took the formal shape under the state supervision and the network of *madrasas* spread across the Muslim world as a formal educational institution. It is yet to be decided the first formal madrasa in the Muslim world. There are a number of opinions.

The history of *madrasa* education in the Indian is spread over more than a thousand years. Initially *madrasa* education system came with the Arab settlers who came with *Malik Ibn-e-Deenar* and settled in the western coast of *Kerala*. *Madrasa* education system was catering to the needs of religious education of Arab settlers and converted locals (Siddiqui, 2012). The establishment of *Delhi Sultanate* in 1106 AD *madrasa* education was popularized and patronaged by the establishment and the rulers were taking very keen interest for establishing *madrasas*. A number of famous *madrasas* came into being at the point of time. During the reign of *Tughlaq* dynasty, hundreds of *madrasas* were established in Delhi alone. *Madrasa* education reached to its culmination during Mughal Empire when it became a formal educational institution where all the students, irrespective of caste, colour, creed and place of birth, used to study together under the same roof to get education.

With the advent of *East India Company* as a colonial regime, not only the *madrasa* education system but also, in a larger term, the entire indigenous education system found it very difficult to survive because it was devoid of political patronage and the western system of education posed a grave danger to the very existence of indigenous education system. Initially the *East India*

Company did not interfere with the local education system but with the passage of *Charter Acts-1813* and *1833* by the British Parliament, the company got involved into the educational affairs of the company-ruled territory. The controversial treatise of Macaulay popularly known as '*Macaulay Minutes*' in favour of British education system in the Indian sub-continent and subsequently its passage on March 7, 1835 by Lord William Bentinck laid the very foundation of western education system in India. And thus the company, directly, became the in-charge of the education affairs of company-ruled territory. In 1837, Persian language was abolished as a court language and replaced by English language. In 1844 Lord Harding passed a resolution which declared that for all kind of posts, a preference would be given to those who could read & write English language. Thus, the English language became a symbol of vertical progress and material well being. The white-collar job became the dream of upper strata of society in multilayered Indian society.

The reflections of renaissance followed by modernism, having faith in the goodness of science and technology, also came with the colonial regime in the Indian sub-continent as well which had already taken Europe and America into its leap. It paved the way for the supremacy and hegemony of west over the east. One of the vices implications of the modernism was that it led to the division of religion (church) from the political domain in Christian dominated countries. This happened because of the bitter experience of dark ages of papal authority followed by the renaissance in Europe. Religion (church) was confined to only religious matters and had no say in matters related to mundane world. This division led to the bifurcation of education as well in sacred and temporal domains. Its implications were largely reflected in the Muslim world and the Indian sub-continent was not exception to that where, after the advent of colonial regime, the compartmentalization of education was done in the same manner either willingly or unwillingly due to religio-social or religio-political reasons (Ahmad, 1991 & Waqar, 2008).

### Rationale of the study

*Madrasa* education in India has been a matter of great concern since 1837 when English language was replaced by Persian as a court language. *Madrasas* were deprived of political patronage after the formal end of Muslim rule in the Indian sub-continent in 1857. Despite financial crunch and series of crisis, they continued to function with the spirit of carrying forward the legacy of traditional Muslim education in the Indian sub-continent. After independence, *madrasa* education again found itself in an acute crisis due to multiple reasons. The most important among them was the migration of *Nawabs* and elite Muslims to newly formed Pakistan. An economically lower stratum of Muslim society was left in India in the lurch with no political patronage to take their cause.

Due to the bitter experience of colonial regime in the country, the left-out Muslims were very conscious for their religious identity and, thus, they tried to preserve it by establishing a number of *madrasas*. *Dar al-Uloom at Deoband* is one such *madrasa* and one of the premier institutions of traditional Muslim education which were established during colonial age. But the scope of *madrasa* education had shrunk and *madrasas* confined themselves to the learning of *Quran, Hadees & Fiqh* only.

Post-independent India witnessed the emergence of huge number of *madrasas* being established by different sections of Muslim society. These sections were representing different schools of thought and so were the *madrasas* established by them. *Madrasas* became the centres of higher learning for the concerned ideology and school of thought. Naturally, the syllabus adopted by them was to cater their ideological notions and produce such scholars who become their ambassadors and propagate their ideology.

Despite huge number of *madrasas* of different schools of thought, not much improvement has taken place in terms of economic well-being of Muslims in India. On the other side, the condition of Muslims has worsened and stagnation has prevailed (Jhingran, 2010). The Union Government and the state governments initiated a number of schemes, like *Modernization of Madrasa Schemes (MOMS)* and *Scheme for Providing Quality Education in Madrasas (SPQEM)* to introduce modern subjects in *madrasa* education to bring *madrasa* graduates at par with the graduates of public institutions. Many universities in India opened their doors for *madrasa* graduates for higher education. But big *madrasas* like *Dar al-Uloom at Deoband* and *Nadwatul Ulama* have altogether rejected these schemes. *Dar al-Uloom at Deoband* does not appreciate *madrasa* graduates taking admission in universities for higher studies and go out from the domain of *madrasa*. On the other side, voices of reforms have been raised from different sections of Muslim society to carry out reforms in the domain of *madrasa* education so as to make them compatible with contemporary times keeping in view that the Islamic character of *madrasas* remain intact.

It seems that no perceptual study has been conducted taking into account the perspective of modern education of *Dar al-Uloom at Deoband* to assess the status of modern education of *Dar al-Uloom* and largely the status of *madrasa* education in India. This paper is a humble effort to find out the answers of different questions regarding *Dar al-Uloom at Deoband* and to locate its approach and position with reference to modern education.

### The objectives of the study

1. To study the need and emergence of *Dar al-Uloom at Deoband*.
2. To study the aims and objectives of *Dar al-Uloom at Deoband* with special reference to modern education.
3. To study the transactional strategies used in *Dar al-Uloom at Deoband* with special reference to modern education.

4. To study the awareness among *madrasa* managements and teachers of the government schemes to introduce modern subjects in *madrasa* education like Modernization of Madrasa Scheme (MOMS) & Scheme for Providing Quality Education in Madrasas (SPQEM).

### Methodology

Present research is a qualitative study of *Darul Uloom at Deoband*. All the *madras* imparting education in India are the population of the study. Purposive sampling technique has been used and *Dar al-Uloom at Deoband* serves as the sample of the study. Seven classes of *Fazilah* and four classes of *Ikhtisas* (specialization) have been selected for observation.

Procedure of data collection and analysis

Survey method has been used in the present research to collect data. The researcher himself visited *Dar al-Uloom at Deoband* with the developed and standized tools to get accurate and factual information. The researcher stayed there to observe classroom practices and pedagogic techniques, interacted with the administration, teachers and students.

### Analysis of data

The study is qualitative in nature and has been carried out keeping in view the objectives of the study. The collected data has been analyzed as per the objectives of the study.

### Dar al-Uloom Deoband

#### Background

The catastrophic incidents of 1857 ended the political legacy of Muslims formally in the Indian sub-continent. Muslims were conceived as the chief conspiring elements against the establishment of *British East India Company* and they were the worst sufferers. As a result, Muslims were the main target of colonial aggression and repression. No stone was left unturned by the colonial regime to break the backbone of Muslims. Around 200,000 (two hundred thousand) Muslims were killed in *Delhi* alone by the colonial establishment. The people were so much scared that there has been complete silence everywhere but with an uneasy calm. Under these circumstances the foundation stone of *Dar al-Uloom at Deoband*, popularly known as *Deoband madrasa*, was laid by the freedom fighter *ulama* to protect Muslim identity, to preserve Muslim civilization and culture, to protect Muslims from the British onslaught and to carry forward the legacy of traditional Muslim education in the Indian subcontinent. The *madrasa* was anti-British from its inception till the independence in 1947. This is also one of the reasons that English language did not find a place in its curriculum as the anger in the entire country was on peek against everything having British tag. It was need of the time and even *Gandhiji* had given a call to boycott Educational institutions of colonial regime and a number of institutions of domestic character were established in different parts of the country. On the other side, the British education system had posed a grave danger not only to the traditional Muslim education but also to the entire indigenious education system of the Indian sub-continent. The establishment of the *Deoband madrasa* was not only a response to the British education system but also the response to the whole gamut of challenges that were posed before Muslims and their culture by the colonial regime (Hashmi, 1989).

Thus, *Dar al-Uloom Deoband* was a larger movement rather than an educational institution. The religious Muslim leadership which could not match its muscles with the colonial power in the battlefield of *Shamli* in 1857 under the leadership of *Haji Imdadullah* (1817-99), to secure political independence and freedom for religion, established this institution to serve twin purpose at the same time. The first was keeping the spirit of fighting alive against the colonial rule and providing the manpower in the resistance against the British government. The second and important purpose was to protect Muslims from the proselytizing activities of *Christian* missionaries and strengthening its base by the presence of its *ulama* as preacher teaching fundamentals of Islam to the Muslims across the Indian sub-continent, especially, in the rural areas.

#### Mystic and spiritual base of *Dar al-Uloom Deoband*

The foundation of the *madrasa* was not just a historical event necessitated only by the socio-political and religio-political reasons but rather it was done on godly revelation and intuitions on the divinity of *ulama* resisting colonial regime for the preservation and protection of Islam. As per the history of *Dar al-Uloom Deoband*, many great people including its founder *Maulana Qasim Nanautavi* (1832-1880) had seen *Prophet Muhammed* in the dreams who instructed him to establish this *madrasa*. Not only the founder, but also many of his companions had revelations (*mukashifaaat*) and dreams regarding the establishment of *Deoband madrasa*. When these divinities used to sit together, if one of them shared that it has been revealed to him to establish a *madrasa* for the propagation and dissemination of Islamic education and this used to be revealed in the same manner by the other divinities. The founder of the *Dar al-Uloom*, *Maulana Qasim Nanautavi* also had a dream in which he saw that he is standing on the roof of *Holy Ka'ba* and streams and canals of water are flowing from the fingers of his hand feet and spreading in different directions of the world. The dream was interpreted by *ulama* as the establishment of the *madrasa* and spreading its light of knowledge and wisdom across the globe (Rizvi, 2014:37-39). The introduction part of the *Taareekh-e- Dar Al-Uloom—history of Deoband Madrasa—* reveals that the idea of establishing a *madrasa* first came in the mind of *Haji Imdad Allah, the chief of the school of thought who had migrated to Mecca*. For the founders, the establishment of a *madrasa* in *Deoband* was not their decision, it had divine sanction, because *Shaikha Ahmad Sarhindi* in the seventeenth century and *Syyid Ahmed Barelvi* in the early nineteenth

century reportedly made a comment that the fragrance of knowledge was emanating from the very soil of *Deoband* town (Metcalf, 2015: 92). The initial construction of *Dar al-Uloom* was also carried out according the directions of *Prophet Muhammad* in the dreams (Rizvi, 2014:46).

Apart from the revelations, the founders had direct lineage to the great traditionalist of India *Shah Wali Allah Dehlavi* (1703-62), the authenticity chain of him reaches to the *Prophet Muhammed* and who himself and his illustrious sons made enormous contribution in the spread of Islam and traditional Islamic education in the Indian subcontinent. It was his illustrious son *Shah Maulana Abdul Aziz Muhaddis Dehlavi* (1746-1824) who first of all declared India is no longer '*Darul Islam*' (abode of Islam) rather it has turned into '*Dar-al-Harb*' (abode of Kufr) (Faruqi, 1963:2). Apart from it, the founders were also attached to the mystical chains to ensure inner caliphate (*khilafat-i-batini*) after the end of *Khilafat-i-Zahiri*. As far as the purification of soul and purging the inner from the sins is concerned, it is worth mentioning that most of its great *ulama* were attached to the mystic orders namely *Chishtiya* and *Naqshbandiya* the authenticity chain of the former reaches to *Shaah Abd al-Raheem Wilayati* while authenticity chain of the later reaches to *Syed Ahmad. Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi* (1828-1905), who succeeded *Maulana Qasim Nanautavi*, apart from teaching Hadith in his hometown, used to impart the knowledge of four mystic orders prevalent in the Indian sub-continent namely '*Chishtiya*', '*Qadiriya*', '*Naqshbandiya*' and '*Saharwardiyah*' (Faruqi, 1963:43).

### Brief Sketch of Dar al-Uloom

The *madrasa* was formally inaugurated very modestly on Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1866 in *Chatta* mosque in *Deoband* town of *Saharanpur* district under the United Provinces. The inauguration ceremony was very humble under the symbolic tree of pomegranate which no longer exists. The ceremony began with the first formal instruction by the first teacher of the *madrasa* *Mulla Mahmud* to the first pupil of the *madrasa* *Mahmud Hasan*, who later on became the principal of the *madrasa* and got the title of '*Shaikh-ul-Hind*', one of the dynamic, inspiring and revolutionary leaders who opened a new front of resistance against the colonial government. Among the founders of the *madrasa* are *Haji Abid Husain*, *Maulana Qasim Nanautavi*, *Maulavi Mahtab Ali*, *Maulwi Zulfiqar Ali*, *Maulvi Fazlur Rahman*, *Munshi Fazl-i-Haq* and *Shaikh Nehal Ahmad*. These divinities of Muslims were not only the initial members of the *Majlis-e-Shura* (*consultative council*), the apex body of the *madrasa*, but also they were the first architects of the *madrasa*. *Maulana Qasim Nanautavi* was the first patron of the *madrasa* while *Haji Abid Husain* was its first *Mohtamim* i.e. Vice chancellor (Rizvi, 2014). Initially there was only one teacher, but when the strength of the students increased, four teachers were appointed. *Maulana Ya'qub Nanautavi*, who had served as deputy inspector of education in *Ajmer*, *Banaras* and *Saharanpur*, was appointed as the principal of the *madrasa*. As mentioned above, the *madrasa* was started in *Chatta Mosque* but very soon it fell short and the *madrasa* was shifted to another nearby specious mosque known as *Qazi Mosque* but when this mosque also fell short, a house near *Qazi Mosque* was taken on rent as the construction of *Jama Masjid* was in progress. Later on the *madrasa* was shifted to *Jama Masjid* till it was shifted to its main campus. In a very short period of time, the *madrasa* succeeded to attract the attention of the masses and ruling elites and the ambit of its activities expanded. On April 15, 1880, the founder of *madrasa* expired while the *madrasa* had completed fifteen years of its establishment and with his demise came to an end the first phase of the *madrasa* followed by *Maulana Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi* (Faruqi, 1963).

### Objectives of Dar al-Uloom

The aims and objects for which the *Dar al-Uloom* at *Deoband* was established have been detailed in its old basic constitution as follows:

1. To teach the *Holy Qur'an*, the *Qur'anic* exegesis, the *Hadith*, the Islamic beliefs and their dialectical interpretation, and all the necessary and useful allied subjects; to provide complete Islamic information to the Muslims; and to render service to Islam through spiritual instruction, guidance and preaching.
2. To give training in Islamic actions and morals and to infuse the Islamic spirit in the lives of the students.
3. To preach and disseminate Islam and to preserve and defend the religion; to propagate Islam through writing and speech; and to cultivate in the Muslims, through education and preaching the morals, actions and sentiments as those of "the best of decades" (*Khayr al-qurun*) and the pious ancestors.
4. To keep off and avoid the influences of the government and to maintain the freedom of thought and knowledge.
5. To establish Arabic schools at different places for the dissemination of the religious sciences and to affiliate them to the *Dar al-Uloom*.

The basic objective of *Dar al-Uloom* was the promotion of *Qur'anic* exegesis i.e. *Tafseer*, *Hadees* and *Fiqh*. As per the review of a number of drafts and books about the founding fathers, it comes clear that the revival of the Islamic sciences was the only concern and basic aim of the *ulama* as many institutions of modern sciences were prevalent everywhere but there was no institution specifically of traditional Muslim education which could be regarded as the centre (Rizvi, 1980). The education in *Deoband madrasa* is not concentrated on the professional or vocational domains rather than it focuses on the character formation, self realization, self expression, modification of behaviour and moral and ethical upbringing and upliftment of the students (Rizvi, 1980 & Hashmi, 1989).

Structure of education and Curriculum of Dar al-Uloom

The *madrasa* was started at a time when the country in general and Muslims in particular were passing through the troubled times and therefore, all the efforts were put to strengthen its base. No structured education scheme was followed at that point of time, rather *Dars-e-Nizami* pattern was followed which was based on books (bookwise system of education) rather than classification.

After seven years of its establishment, the *Majlis-e-shura* (consultative council) strongly felt the need of classification as the strength of the students rose up and more structured system was needed in place. The entire education system was divided into three categories i.e. Primary, Middle (*Fazilah*) and High Mastery (specialization). Primary education is not defined in an orderly manner neither the researcher could find primary classes in the campus of *Dar al-Uloom* at *Deoband*. It is just a preparatory or transitory stage to enter into middle stage, the main programme of the *madrasa*. Middle stage initially was spread over ten years, on the recommendations of the curriculum committee; it was reduced to six years (Gilani, 1373 AH). The curriculum was again revised in 1977 when few new books were added while the others were deleted from the curriculum. No structural change could take place. In 1994, revised curriculum was prepared and presented before curriculum committee and got its approval which is still going on. This middle stage is the main programme of the *madrasa* and is known as *Darajaat-e-Arabia* and after successful completion of this course; a student is conferred the degree of *Fazilah* (Nadwi, 2004). Its products are given the title of *Qasmi* after successful completion of *Fazilah* degree to symbolise the educational and spiritual bond with its founder *Maulavi Qasim Nanautavi* and their *alma mater*. The teaching of modern subjects did not find any space in its core curriculum from the beginning till now. It has a number of reasons and the most important is that the common perception of its founders was that there were government *madrasas* everywhere imparting the knowledge of modern subjects. In-depth teaching of *Qur'anic* exegesis did not find its due space in any *madrasa*. As a result, these traditional sciences were at the verge of extinction. There was a pressing need to have a *madrasa* of pure traditional education and the preservation of traditional knowledge. Efforts were mooted in this regard by *ulama* and the establishment of the *Dar al-Uloom* was the effect and materialization of those efforts.

With the purpose of integrating its students with livelihood, it started the *Department of Calligraphy* in 1936 and the *Department of Crafts* in 1937. Department of Calligraphy runs one year course in Urdu while the Department of Craft now has reduced into stitching and tailoring only. The course of *Unani* medicine which was modestly started in 1879 grew up into *Tibbiya College* running a professional programme of four years in 1960 having been recognized by the government. But the *Tibbiya College* no longer exists in *Dar al-Uloom* at present. The official history of the *madrasa* namely *Tareekh-e-Dar al-Uloom Deoband* reveals the existence of the *Department of Modern Sciences*, but the researcher could not find it physically existing in the campus of *Dar al-Uloom* at *Deoband* and the authorities also failed to convince the researcher in this regard. The *Department of Education* which imparts the knowledge of English language and literature was established in 2002 due to the efforts of a number of *Majlis-e-Shura* members which also includes for runner of modern education in the *madrasas* *Maulana Badruddin Ajmal*, an alumnus of *Dar al-Uloom Deoband*, a member of Parliament, representing *Dhubri, Assam*, and the founder of *All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF)*.

The basic thrust of the *madrasa* was the promotion and preservation of traditional knowledge of *Qur'anic* exegesis and this is very categorically put in the objectives of the *madrasa*.

### Department of English

The *madrasa* has not been anti-English education in general. In fact its founder was in favour of modern education for *ulama*, even in the proceedings of the annual report of 1903, there have been suggestions to provide stipend to those students who wished to get the education of modern subjects after completion of their education in the *madrasa* but this suggestion could not be materialized due to paucity of funds in the *madrasa* (Rizvi, 2014:208) and the untimely death of its founder as well. To materialize the vision of its founder, it opened the Department of English in 2002 with objective of preparing its graduates to spread the message of Islam in far and wide and could be able to respond to the foes of Islam in their language. The department is running a two years diploma programme in English language and literature.

### Department of Computer (Shoba-ae-Computer)

Department of Computer was established in *Darul Uloom* in April, 1996. *Maulana Abdus Salam Qasmi* heads the department and he is also the founder of the department. He left his job in *Central Information Department, Ministry of Defence and Aviation, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* to serve his *alma mater*. The Department of Computer is running full time and part time Diploma courses for the passed-outs of *Dar al-Uloom* and for the students of English Department of *Dar al-Uloom*. It has well established computer lab along with two regular instructors.

### Methods of Teaching in Dar al-Uloom

*Dar al-Uloom* is following the book-centred teaching learning approach despite the fact that teacher occupies an important position in the entire teaching learning process. It is very much different from university system of education where the teacher delivers a lecture freely, based on his own understanding, on the specific topics prescribed in the syllabus or there is a power point presentation. Here books are the focal point and specific books of different subjects are fixed for each year to be taught and the students are evaluated on the basis of the books taught in the class. As the teacher enters in the classroom and settles down on his seat, the particular book is placed in front of the teacher and sometimes one and sometimes more than one student start loud reading of the text from the book which is to be taught by the teacher. The text could be *Qur'anic* verses, *Hadith*, *Usool-e-Hadith* (principles of Hadith) and a passage from *Fiqh* or *Usool-e-Fiqh* (principles of fiqh) etc. The loud reading at *Dar al-Uloom* resembles to the recitation of *Holy Qur'an*, especially, in the teaching of *Hadith* and *Fiqh*. There prevails pin-drop silence in the class while the teacher explains the text. In the initial and language classes the teacher first explains the difficult words and then explains the passage in detail but in higher classes the explanation of meaning is being done simultaneously along with the explanation of the text. Black board is hardly used in the higher classes of *Fazilah*. In the initial years students ask questions directly but in higher classes it is not possible to ask questions directly because of huge crowd in the class. In this situation

students write their questions on a sheet of paper and pass it on to the teacher. Within minute all the question reach to the teacher and he responds relevant questions. The use of educational technology, multi-media or any electronic device found no space in the entire teaching learning process at *Dar al-Uloom*. Seating arrangement in some classrooms is not sufficient to accommodate all the students of the class. Some students in a number of classes were found sitting on the sleepers outside the classroom due to paucity of space in the classroom. Chair table facility has not been provided anywhere in the *madrasa* even the library, *Office of Mohtamim* has not got chair-table sitting arrangement.

*Dar al-Uloom* imparts the knowledge of Islamic sciences to the male members of Muslims only. No provision has been made to educate female members of the community despite the fact that nowhere it is mentioned in *Dastoor-e-Asaasi* or the *History of Dar al-Uloom Deoband* making it a seat of higher learning in Islamic sciences for male members only.

#### Majlis-e-Taaleemi (Academic Council)

As per the Article 54 of *Dastoor-e-Asaasi* (Constitution of Dar al-Uloom) of June, 1973, *Dar al-Uloom Deoband* has a permanent *Majlis-e-Taalimi* (academic council) which consists of *Mohtamim*, Principal, two deputy *Mohtamims* and two teachers from *Ulya*, one out of them heads the council as *Nazim*. Principal presides over all the meetings related to curriculum and academic activities. Article 55 of *Dastoor-e-Asaasi*, empowers *Majlis-e-Taalimee* to propose the agenda of reform in curriculum, if need arises, to *Majlis-e-Shura* (*Dastoor-e-Asaasi*, 1973).

The duration and tenures of *Nazim-e-Taleem* got no mention in *Dastoor-e-Asaasi*. The meetings of *Majlis-e-Taalimi* are held as per the needs and requirements. Members of the *Majlis-e-Taalimi* are informed in advanced in written form and the summary of the meeting is recorded and filed.

#### Programmes of Studies

*Fazilah* or *Fazilat* is the main programme at *Dar al-Uloom Deoband*. Maximum students of the *madrasa* are enrolled in this programme. It is spread over nine years rigorous study of *Ilm al-sarf* (morphology), *Ilm al-Nahu* (syntax), *Ilm al-ma'ani* (semantics), *Fiqh* (jurisprudence), *Usool-i-Fiqh* (principles of jurisprudence), *Hadith* (sayings and doings of Prophet Muhammed), *Usool-i-Hadith*, *Tafseer* (Interpretation and commentary of *Qur'an* and logical sciences etc. Following is the table of syllabus transacted at *Fazilah* level.

Table-I  
Fazilah Syllabus\*

| Years     | Subjects   |
|-----------|--|
| Year-I    | Seerat, Sarf, Nahu, Tamreen Arabi & Tajweed  |
| Year-II   | Nahu, Sarf, Tamreen Arabi, Fiqh, Mantiq, Tajweed & Khush Nawesi  |
| Year-III  | Tarjuma Qur'an, Fiqh, Nahu, Arabi Adab wa Hadith, Tamreen Arabi, Islami Akhlaq, Tajweed and Mutala   |
| Year-IV   | Tarjuma Qur'an, Fiqh, Al-balagh wa al-Hadith, Usool-e-Fiqh   |
| Year-V    | Fiqh, Tarjuma-e-Qur'an, Ma'aani, Usool-e-Fiqh, Arabi Adab, Mantiq wa Aqaed, Tajweed and Mutala   |
| Year-VI   | Tafseer, Fiqh, Usool-e-tafseer wa usool-e-Fiqh, Arabi Adab, Falsafa, Tajweed and Mutala  |
| Year-VII  | Hadith, Fiqh, Aqaed wa Faraez, Tajweed and Mutala  |
| Year-VIII | Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmizi, Abu Daud, Nasayee, Ibn-e-Maja, Tah'tawi, Shamael-e-Tirmizi, Mu'atta Imaam Malik, Mu'atta Imam Muhammed and Tajweed-o-Mashq |

**Interpretation of Table-I:** The whole syllabus of *Fazilah* programme of eight years does not include a single subject from social sciences, natural sciences. Urdu, Hindi and English languages also could not find any mention. Though the medium of instruction is Urdu but there is not a single book teaching Urdu as a subject. The major thrust is on *Hanafi-Oriented-Interpretation* of *Qur'an*, *Hadeeth* and finally the *Hanafi Fiqh*.

During observation of the classroom practices, it was very clearly coming out that the teachers were making their level best to prove the supremacy of Hanafi School of Law over other schools of Islamic jurisprudence.

Provisions have also been made in *Dar al-Uloom* for the specialization in Tafseer, Hadees, Fiqh and Arabic language and literature etc. for the students who want to get specialization and have further studies. Following is the table of different programmes offered after *Fazilah*.

**Table-II**  
Specialization Programmes

| Programmes             | Duration and Nature of the course  |
|------------------------|--|
| Takmeel-e-Uloom        | It is one year composite programme in Tafseer, Hadith and Fiqh.                        |
| Takmeel-e-Tafseer      | It is one year course in the specialization of Qur'anic commentary and interpretation. |
| Takmeel-e-Ifta         | It one year course in the specialization of Fatwa (religious decree).                  |
| Tadreeb-e-Ifta         | It is one year programme in Fatwa training.  |
| Takmeel-e-Adab-e-Arabi | It is one year programme in Arabic language and literature.                            |
| Takhas-sus-fil-Hadith  | It two year specialization programme in Hadith sciences.                               |
| Takhas-sus-Fil-Adab    | It is one year specialization programme in Arabic language and literature.             |
| Shaikhul Hind Academy  | It runs one year Diploma in Journalism.  |

**Table-III**  
Syllabus of Diploma in English Language and Literature

| Years   | Subjects   |
|---------|--|
| Year-I  | English Grammar, Textbook (NCERT series I-VIII), Composition, Translation, spoken English and Tutorial.                      |
| Year-II | Textbook (NCERT IX-B.A), Essay and Composition, Translation, English Grammar, Dawah, Spoken English and Computer & Internet. |

## Conclusion

*Dar al-Uloom* at *Deoband* came into being at a time when the country in general and Muslim community in particular was passing through the crunch time. It was deprived of political patronage after the formal end of Mughal rule in the sub-continent. The barbaric and catastrophic incidents in post-1858 scenario in which hundreds of thousands of Muslims in general and *ulama* in particular were sent to gallows by the colonial regime.

In such gloomy situations, the establishment of *Dar al-Uloom* at *Deoband* was a beacon of hope to preserve centuries old traditional Islamic education of *Qur'anic* exegesis namely *Qur'an*, *Hadees* and *Fiqh*.

Since its *ulama* took an active role in the war against the colonial regime, it got worldwide popularity within a short span of time and became a prestigious seat of higher learning in *Tafseer*, *Hadees* and *Fiqh* and its education system attracted students of different parts of the world. Due to its close ties with *Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind*, a huge network of *madrasas* spread throughout the length and breadth of the country propagating the gospels of Islam and spreading the ideology of *Deoband madrasa*.

*Dar al-Uloom* was established in pre-independence scenario. The post-independence has witnessed structural changes in different vistas of human activity. The most important among them is the boon of science and technology. Because of the progress of science and technology radical changes have taken place in education system, pedagogic techniques and content as well. There is pressing need to keep *Dar al-Uloom* updated to make it compatible with the changing world and that its graduates are efficient enough to keep pace with the competitive world of today.

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#### Author's notes

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